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The Last Chronicle of Barset

BY

ANTHONY TROLLOPE.

With Illustrations by G. H. Thomas

SMITH, ELDER, & Co.

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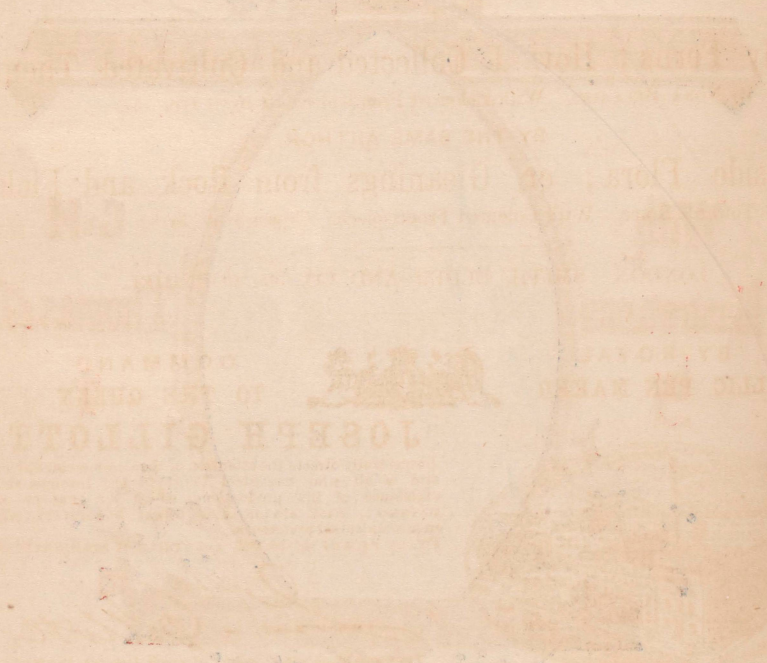

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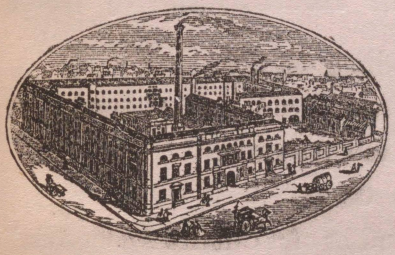

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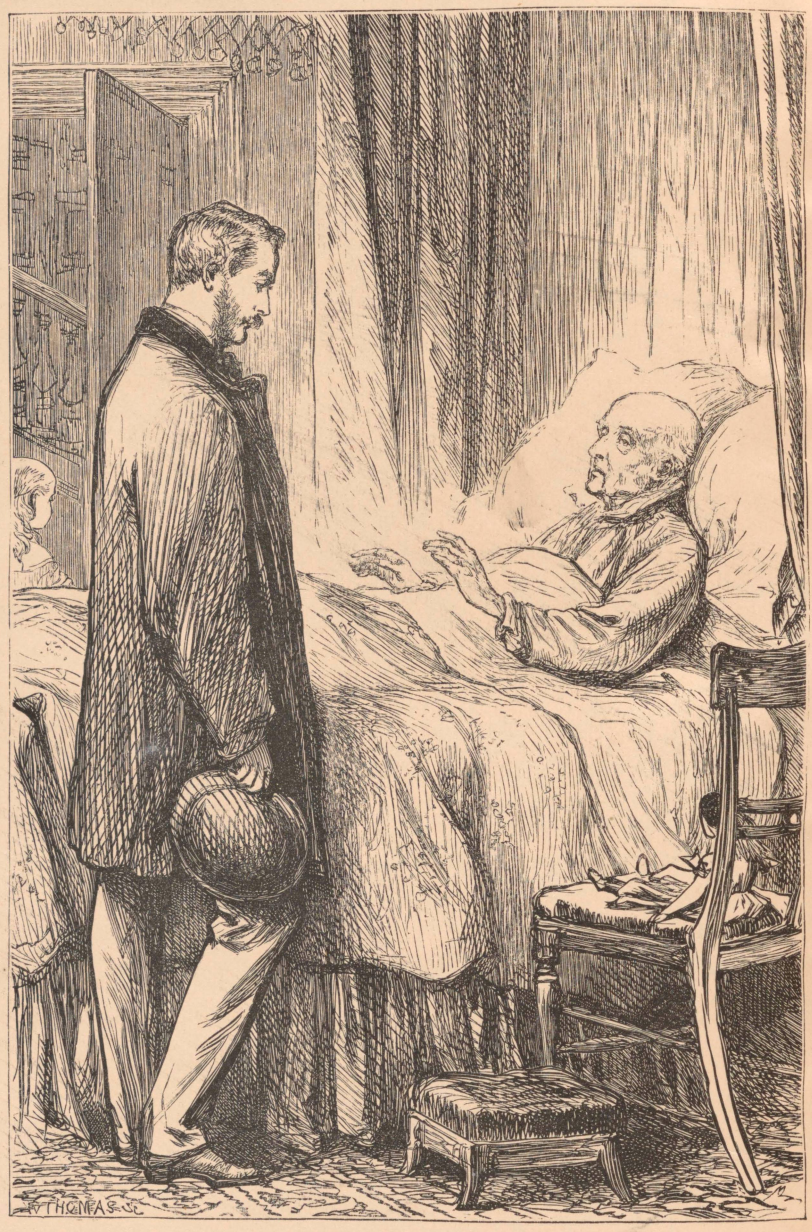
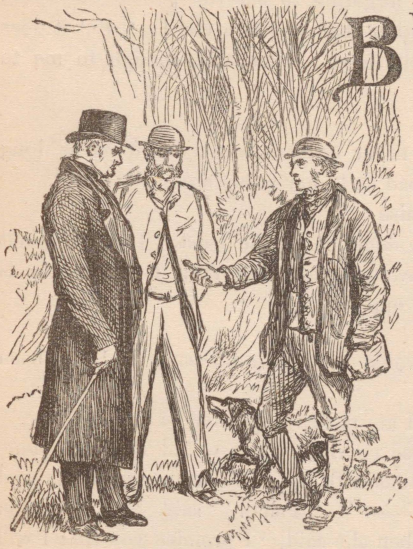


"Honour thy Father,—that thy days may be long in the Land."

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE CROSS-GRAINEDNESS OF MEN.



BY the time that the archdeacon reached Plumstead his enthusiasm in favour of Grace Crawley had somewhat cooled itself; and the language which from time to time he prepared for conveying his impressions to his wife, became less fervid as he approached his home. There was his pledge, and by that he would abide;—and so much he would make both his wife and his son understand. But any idea which he might have entertained for a moment of extending the promise he had given and relaxing that given to him was gone before he saw his own chimneys. Indeed, I fear he had by that time begun to feel that the only salvation now open to him must come from the jury's verdict. If the jury should declare Mr. Crawley to be guilty, then——; he would not say even to himself that in such case all would be right, but he did feel that much as he might regret the fate of the poor Crawleys, and of the girl whom in his warmth he had declared to be almost an angel, nevertheless to him personally such a verdict would bring consolatory comfort.

"I have seen Miss Crawley," he said to his wife, as soon as he had closed the door of his study, before he had been two minutes out of the chaise. He had determined that he would dash at the subject at once, and he thus carried his resolution into effect.

"You have seen Grace Crawley?"

"Yes; I went up to the parsonage and called upon her. Lady Lufton advised me to do so."

"And Henry?"

"Oh, Henry has gone. He was only there one night. I suppose he saw her, but I am not sure."

"Would not Miss Crawley tell you?"

"I forgot to ask her." Mrs. Grantly, at hearing this, expressed her surprise by opening wide her eyes. He had gone all the way over to Framley on purpose to look after his son, and learn what were his doings, and when there he had forgotten to ask the person who could have given him better information than any one else! "But it does not signify," continued the archdeacon; "she said enough to me to make that of no importance."

"And what did she say?"

"She said that she would never consent to marry Henry as long as there was any suspicion abroad as to her father's guilt."

"And you believe her promise?"

"Certainly I do; I do not doubt it in the least. I put implicit confidence in her. And I have promised her that if her father is acquitted,—I will withdraw my opposition."

"No!"

"But I have. And you would have done the same had you been there."

"I doubt that, my dear. I am not so impulsive as you are."

"You could not have helped yourself. You would have felt yourself obliged to be equally generous with her. She came up to me and she put her hand upon me ——" "Psha!" said Mrs. Grantly. "But she did, my dear; and then she said, 'I promise you that I will not become your son's wife while people think that papa stole this money.' What else could I do?"

"And is she pretty?"

"Very pretty; very beautiful."

"And like a lady?"

"Quite like a lady. There is no mistake about that."

"And she behaved well?"

"Admirably," said the archdeacon, who was in a measure compelled to justify the generosity into which he had been betrayed by his feelings.

"Then she is a paragon," said Mrs. Grantly.

"I don't know what you may call a paragon, my dear. I say that she is a lady, and that she is extremely good-looking, and that she behaved very well. I cannot say less in her favour. I am sure you would not say less yourself, if you had been present."

"She must be a wonderful young woman."

"I don't know anything about her being wonderful."

"She must be wonderful when she has succeeded both with the son and with the father."

"I wish you had been there instead of me," said the archdeacon, angrily. Mrs. Grantly very probably wished so also, feeling that in that case a more serene mode of business would have been adopted. How keenly susceptible the archdeacon still was to the influences of feminine charms, no one knew better than Mrs. Grantly, and whenever she became aware that he had been in this way seduced from the wisdom of his cooler judgment she always felt something akin to indignation against the seducer. As for her husband, she probably told herself at such moments that he was an old goose. "If you had been there, and Henry with you, you would have made a great deal worse job of it than I have done," said the archdeacon.

"I don't say you have made a bad job of it, my dear," said Mrs. Grantly. "But it's past eight, and you must be terribly in want of your dinner. Had you not better go up and dress?"

In the evening the plan of the future campaign was arranged between them. The archdeacon would not write to his son at all. In passing through Barchester he had abandoned his idea of despatching a note from the hotel, feeling that such a note as would be required was not easily written in a hurry. Mrs. Grantly would now write to her son, telling him that circumstances had changed, that it would be altogether unnecessary for him to sell his furniture, and begging him to come over and see his father without a day's delay. She wrote her letter that night, and read to the archdeacon all that she had written, —with the exception of the postscript:—"You may be quite sure that there will be no unpleasantness with your father." That was the postscript which was not communicated to the archdeacon.

On the third day after that Henry Grantly did come over to Plumstead. His mother in her letter to him had not explained how it had come to pass that the sale of his furniture would be unnecessary. His father had given him to understand distinctly that his income would be withdrawn from him unless he would express his intention of giving up Miss Crawley; and it had been admitted among them all that Cosby Lodge must be abandoned if this were done. He certainly would not give up Grace Crawley. Sooner than that, he would give up every stick in his possession, and go and live in New Zealand if it were necessary. Not only had Grace's conduct to him made him thus firm, but the natural bent of his own disposition had tended that way also. His father had attempted to dictate to him, and sooner than

submit to that he would sell the coat off his back. Had his father confined his opposition to advice, and had Miss Crawley been less firm in her view of her duty, the major might have been less firm also. But things had so gone that he was determined to be fixed as granite. If others would not be moved from their resolves, neither would he. Such being the state of his mind, he could not understand why he was thus summoned to Plumstead. He had already written over to Pau about his house, and it was well that he should, at any rate, see his mother before he started. He was willing, therefore, to go to Plumstead, but he took no steps as to the withdrawal of those auctioneer's bills to which the archdeacon so strongly objected. When he drove into the rectory yard, his father was standing there before him. "Henry," he said, "I am very glad to see you. I am very much obliged to you for coming." Then Henry got out of his cart and shook hands with his father, and the archdeacon began to talk about the weather. "Your mother has gone into Barchester to see your grandfather," said the archdeacon. "If you are not tired, we might as well take a walk. I want to go up as far as Flurry's cottage." The major of course declared that he was not at all tired, and that he should be delighted of all things to go up and see old Flurry, and thus they started. Young Grantly had not even been into the house before he left the yard with his father. Of course, he was thinking of the coming sale at Cosby Lodge, and of his future life at Pau, and of his injured position in the world. There would be no longer any occasion for him to be solicitous as to the Plumstead foxes. Of course these things were in his mind; but he could not begin to speak of them till his father did so. "I'm afraid your grandfather is not very strong," said the archdeacon, shaking his head. "I fear he won't be with us very long."

"Is it so bad as that, sir?"

"Well, you know, he is an old man, Henry; and he was always somewhat old for his age. He will be eighty, if he lives two years longer, I think. But he'll never reach eighty;—never. You must go and see him before you go back home; you must indeed." The major, of course, promised that he would see his grandfather, and the archdeacon told his son how nearly the old man had fallen in the passage between the cathedral and the deanery. In this way they had nearly made their way up to the gamekeeper's cottage without a word of reference to any subject that touched upon the matter of which each of them was of course thinking. Whether the major intended to remain at home or to live at Pau, the subject of Mr. Harding's health was a natural topic for conversation between him and his father; but when his father

stopped suddenly, and began to tell him how a fox had been trapped on Darvell's farm,—" and of course it was a Plumstead fox,—there can be no doubt that Flurry is right about that;"—when the archdeacon spoke of this iniquity with much warmth, and told his son how he had at once written off to Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne, and how Mr. Thorne had declared that he didn't believe a word of it, and how Flurry had produced the pad of the fox, with the marks of the trap on the skin, —then the son began to feel that the ground was becoming very warm, and that he could not go on much longer without rushing into details about Grace Crawley. "I've no more doubt that it was one of our foxes than that I stand here," said the archdeacon.

"It doesn't matter where the fox was bred. It shouldn't have been trapped," said the major.

"Of course not," said the archdeacon, indignantly. I wonder whether he would have been so keen had a Romanist priest come into his parish, and turned one of his Protestants into a Papist?

Then Flurry came up, and produced the identical pad out of his pocket. "I don't suppose it was intended," said the major, looking at the interesting relic with scrutinizing eyes. "I suppose it was caught in a rabbit-trap,—eh, Flurry?"

"I don't see what right a man has with traps at all, when gentlemen is particular about their foxes," said Flurry. "Of course they'd call it rabbits."

"I never liked that man on Darvell's farm," said the archdeacon.

"Nor I either," said Flurry. "No farmer ought to be on that land who don't have a horse of his own. And if I war Squire Thorne, I wouldn't have no farmer there who didn't keep no horse. When a farmer has a horse of his own, and follies the hounds, there ain't no rabbit-traps;—never. How does that come about, Mr. Henry? Rabbits! I know very well what rabbits is!"

Mr. Henry shook his head, and turned away, and the archdeacon followed him. There was an hypocrisy about this pretended care for the foxes which displeased the major. He could not, of course, tell his father that the foxes were no longer anything to him; but yet he must make it understood that such was his conviction. His mother had written to him, saying that the sale of furniture need not take place. It might be all very well for his mother to say that, or for his father; but, after what had taken place, he could consent to remain in England on no other understanding than that his income should be made permanent to him. Such permanence must not be any longer dependent on his father's caprice. In these days he had come to be somewhat in

love with poverty and Pau, and had been feeding on the luxury of his grievance. There is, perhaps, nothing so pleasant as the preparation for self-sacrifice. To give up Cosby Lodge and the foxes, to marry a penniless wife, and go and live at Pau on six or seven hundred a year, seemed just now to Major Grantly to be a fine thing, and he did not intend to abandon this fine thing without receiving a very clear reason for doing so. "I can't quite understand Thorne," said the archdeacon. "He used to be so particular about the foxes, and I don't suppose that a country gentleman will change his ideas because he has given up hunting himself."

"Mr. Thorne never thought much of Flurry," said Henry Grantly, with his mind intent upon Pau and his grievance.

"He might take my word at any rate," said the archdeacon.

It was a known fact that the archdeacon's solicitude about the Plumstead covers was wholly on behalf of his son the major. The major himself knew this thoroughly, and felt that his father's present special anxiety was intended as a corroboration of the tidings conveyed in his mother's letter. Every word so uttered was meant to have reference to his son's future residence in the country. "Father," he said, turning round shortly, and standing before the archdeacon in the pathway, "I think you are quite right about the covers. I feel sure that every gentleman who preserves a fox does good to the country. I am sorry that I shall not have a closer interest in the matter myself."

"Why shouldn't you have a closer interest in it?" said the archdeacon.

"Because I shall be living abroad."

"You got your mother's letter?"

"Yes; I got my mother's letter."

"Did she not tell you that you can stay where you are?"

"Yes, she said so. But, to tell you the truth, sir, I do not like the risk of living beyond my assured income."

"But if I justify it?"

"I do not wish to complain, sir, but you have made me understand that you can, and that in certain circumstances you will, at a moment, withdraw what you give me. Since this was said to me, I have felt myself to be unsafe in such a house as Cosby Lodge."

The archdeacon did not know how to explain. He had intended that the real explanation should be given by Mrs. Grantly, and had been anxious to return to his old relations with his son without any exact terms on his own part. But his son was, as he thought, awkward,

and would drive him to some speech that was unnecessary. "You need not be unsafe there at all," he said, half angrily.

"I must be unsafe if I am not sure of my income."

"Your income is not in any danger. But you had better speak to your mother about it. For myself, I think I may say that I have never yet behaved to any of you with harshness. A son should, at any rate, not be offended because a father thinks that he is entitled to some consideration for what he does."

"There are some points on which a son cannot give way even to his father, sir."

"You had better speak to your mother, Henry. She will explain to you what has taken place. Look at that plantation. You don't remember it, but every tree there was planted since you were born. I bought that farm from old Mr. Thorne, when he was purchasing St. Ewold's Downs, and it was the first bit of land I ever had of my own."

"That is not in Plumstead, I think?"

"No: this is Plumstead, where we stand, but that's in Eiderdown. The parishes run in and out here. I never bought any other land as cheap as I bought that."

"And did old Thorne make a good purchase at St. Ewold's?"

"Yes, I fancy he did. It gave him the whole of the parish, which was a great thing. It is astonishing how land has risen in value since that, and yet rents are not so very much higher. They who buy land now can't have above two-and-a-half for their money."

"I wonder people are so fond of land," said the major.

"It is a comfortable feeling to know that you stand on your own ground. Land is about the only thing that can't fly away. And then, you see, land gives so much more than the rent. It gives position and influence and political power, to say nothing about the game. We'll go back now. I daresay your mother will be at home by this time."

The archdeacon was striving to teach a great lesson to his son when he thus spoke of the pleasure which a man feels when he stands upon his own ground. He was bidding his son to understand how great was the position of an heir to a landed property, and how small the position of a man depending on what Dr. Grantly himself would have called a scratch income,—an income made up of a few odds and ends, a share or two in this company and a share or two in that, a slight venture in foreign stocks, a small mortgage and such like convenient but uninfluential driblets. A man, no doubt, may live at Pau on driblets; may pay his way and drink his bottle of cheap wine, and enjoy life after a fashion while

reading Galignani and looking at the mountains. But,—as it seemed to the archdeacon,—when there was a choice between this kind of thing, and fox-covers at Plumstead, and a seat among the magistrates of Barsetshire, and an establishment full of horses, beeves, swine, carriages, and hayricks, a man brought up as his son had been brought up ought not to be very long in choosing. It never entered into the archdeacon's mind that he was tempting his son; but Henry Grantly felt that he was having the good things of the world shown to him, and that he was being told that they should be his—for a consideration.

The major, in his present mood, looked at the matter from his own point of view, and determined that the consideration was too high. He was pledged not to give up Grace Crawley, and he would not yield on that point, though he might be tempted by all the fox-covers in Barsetshire. At this moment he did not know how far his father was prepared to yield, or how far it was expected that he should yield himself. He was told that he had to speak to his mother. He would speak to his mother, but, in the meantime, he could not bring himself to make a comfortable answer to his father's eloquent praise of landed property. He could not allow himself to be enthusiastic on the matter till he knew what was expected of him if he chose to submit to be made a British squire. At present Galignani and the mountains had their charms for him. There was, therefore, but little conversation between the father and the son as they walked back to the rectory.

Late that night the major heard the whole story from his mother. Gradually, and as though unintentionally, Mrs. Grantly told him all she knew of the archdeacon's visit to Framley. Mrs. Grantly was quite as anxious as was her husband to keep her son at home, and therefore she omitted in her story those little sneers against Grace which she herself had been tempted to make by the archdeacon's fervour in the girl's favour. The major said as little as was possible while he was being told of his father's adventure, and expressed neither anger nor satisfaction till he had been made thoroughly to understand that Grace had pledged herself not to marry him as long as any suspicion should rest upon her father's name.

"Your father is quite satisfied with her," said Mrs. Grantly. "He thinks that she is behaving very well."

"My father had no right to exact such a pledge."

"But she made it of her own accord. She was the first to speak about Mr. Crawley's supposed guilt. Your father never mentioned it."

"He must have led to it; and I think he had no right to do so. He had no right to go to her at all."

"Now don't be foolish, Henry."

"I don't see that I am foolish."

"Yes, you are. A man is foolish if he won't take what he wants without asking exactly how he is to come by it. That your father should be anxious is the most natural thing in the world. You know how high he has always held his own head, and how much he thinks about the characters and position of clergymen. It is not surprising that he should dislike the idea of such a marriage."

"Grace Crawley would disgrace no family," said the lover.

"That's all very well for you to say, and I'll take your word that it is so;—that is as far as the young lady goes herself. And there's your father almost as much in love with her as you are. I don't know what you would have?"

"I would be left alone."

"But what harm has been done you? From what you yourself have told me, I know that Miss Crawley has said the same thing to you that she has said to her father. You can't but admire her for the feeling."

"I admire her for everything."

"Very well. We don't say anything against that."

"And I don't mean to give her up."

"Very well again. Let us hope that Mr. Crawley will be acquitted, and then all will be right. Your father never goes back from his promise. He is always better than his word. You'll find that if Mr. Crawley is acquitted, or if he escapes in any way, your father will only be happy of an excuse to make much of the young lady. You should not be hard on him, Henry. Don't you see that it is his one great desire to keep you near to him? The sight of those odious bills nearly broke his heart."

"Then why did he threaten me?"

"Henry, you are obstinate."

"I am not obstinate, mother."

"Yes, you are. You remember nothing, and you forget nothing. You expect everything to be made smooth for you, and will do nothing towards making things smooth for anybody else. You ought to promise to give up the sale. If the worst came to the worst, your father would not let you suffer in pocket for yielding to him in so much.

"If the worst comes to the worst, I wish to take nothing from my father."

"You won't put off the sale, then?"

The son paused a moment before he answered his mother, thinking over all the circumstances of his position. "I cannot do so as long as

I am subject to my father's threat," he said at last. "What took place between my father and Miss Crawley can go for nothing with me. He has told me that his allowance to me is to be withdrawn. Let him tell me that he has reconsidered the matter."

"But he has not withdrawn it. The last quarter was paid to your account only the other day. He does not mean to withdraw it."

"Let him tell me so; let him tell me that my power of living at Cosby Lodge does not depend on my marriage,—that my income will be continued to me whether I marry or no, and I'll arrange matters with the auctioneer to-morrow. You can't suppose that I should prefer to live in France."

"Henry, you are too hard on your father."

"I think, mother, he has been too hard upon me."

"It is you that are to blame now. I tell you plainly that that is my opinion. If evil comes of it, it will be your own fault."

"If evil come of it I must bear it."

"A son ought to give up something to his father;—especially to a father so indulgent as yours."

But it was of no use. And Mrs. Grantly when she went to her bed could only lament in her own mind over what, in discussing the matter afterwards with her sister, she called the cross-grainedness of men. "They are as like each other as two peas," she said, "and though each of them wished to be generous, neither of them would condescend to be just." Early on the following morning there was, no doubt, much said on the subject between the archdeacon and his wife before they met their son at breakfast; but neither at breakfast nor afterwards was there a word said between the father and son that had the slightest reference to the subject in dispute between them. The archdeacon made no more speeches in favour of land, nor did he revert to the foxes. He was very civil to his son;—too civil by half, as Mrs. Grantly continued to say to herself. And then the major drove himself away in his cart, going through Barchester, so that he might see his grandfather. When he wished his father good-by, the archdeacon shook hands with him, and said something about the chance of rain. Had he not better take the big umbrella? The major thanked him courteously, and said that he did not think it would rain. Then he was gone. "Upon his own head be it," said the archdeacon when his son's step was heard in the passage leading to the back-yard. Then Mrs. Grantly got up quietly and followed her son. She found him settling himself in his dog-cart, while the servant who was to accompany him was still at the horse's head. She went up close to him, and, standing

by the wheel of the gig, whispered a word or two into his ear. "If you love me, Henry, you will postpone the sale. Do it for my sake." There came across his face a look of great pain, but he answered her not a word.

The archdeacon was walking about the room striking one hand open with the other closed, clearly in a tumult of anger, when his wife returned to him. "I have done all that I can," he said,—"all that I can; more, indeed, than was becoming for me. Upon his own head be it. Upon his own head be it!"

"What is it that you fear?" she asked.

"I fear nothing. But if he chooses to sell his things at Cosby Lodge he must abide the consequences. They shall not be replaced with my money."

"What will it matter if he does sell them?"

"Matter! Do you think there is a single person in the county who will not know that his doing so is a sign that he has quarrelled with me?"

"But he has not quarrelled with you."

"I can tell you then, that in that case I shall have quarrelled with him! I have not been a hard father, but there are some things which a man cannot bear. Of course you will take his part."

"I am taking no part. I only want to see peace between you."

"Peace!—yes; peace indeed. I am to yield in everything. I am to be nobody. Look here;—as sure as ever an auctioneer's hammer is raised at Cosby Lodge, I will alter the settlement of the property. Every acre shall belong to Charles. There is my word for it." The poor woman had nothing more to say;—nothing more to say at that moment. She thought that at the present conjuncture her husband was less in the wrong than her son, but she could not tell him so lest she should strengthen him in his wrath.

Henry Grantly found his grandfather in bed, with Posy seated on the bed beside him. "My father told me that you were not quite well, and I thought that I would look in," said the major.

"Thank you, my dear;—it is very good of you. There is not much the matter with me, but I am not quite so strong as I was once." And the old man smiled as he held his grandson's hand.

"And how is cousin Posy?" said the major.

"Posy is quite well;—isn't she, my darling?" said the old man.

"Grandpa doesn't go to the cathedral now," said Posy; "so I come in to talk to him. Don't I, grandpa?"

"And to play cat's-cradle;—only we have not had any cat's-cradle this morning,—have we, Posy?"

"Mrs. Baxter told me not to play this morning, because it's cold for grandpa to sit up in bed," said Posy.

When the major had been there about twenty minutes he was preparing to take his leave,—but Mr. Harding, bidding Posy to go out of the room, told his grandson that he had a word to say to him. "I don't like to interfere, Henry," he said, "but I am afraid that things are not quite smooth at Plumstead."

"There is nothing wrong between me and my mother," said the major.

"God forbid that there should be; but, my dear boy, don't let there be anything wrong between you and your father. He is a good man, and the time will come when you will be proud of his memory."

"I am proud of him now."

"Then be gentle with him,—and submit yourself. I am an old man now,—very fast going away from all those I love here. But I am happy in leaving my children because they have ever been gentle to me and kind. If I am permitted to remember them whither I am going, my thoughts of them will all be pleasant. Should it not be much to them that they have made my death-bed happy?"

The major could not but tell himself that Mr. Harding had been a man easy to please, easy to satisfy, and, in that respect, very different from his father. But of course he said nothing of this. "I will do my best," he replied.

"Do, my boy. Honour thy father,—that thy days may be long in the land."

It seemed to the major as he drove away from Barchester that everybody was against him; and yet he was sure that he himself was right. He could not give up Grace Crawley; and unless he were to do so he could not live at Cosby Lodge.

CHAPTER LIX.

A LADY PRESENTS HER COMPLIMENTS TO MISS L. D.

One morning, while Lily Dale was staying with Mrs. Thorne in London, there was brought up to her room, as she was dressing for dinner, a letter which the postman had just left for her. The address was written with a feminine hand, and Lily was at once aware that she did not know the writing. The angles were very acute, and the lines were very straight, and the vowels looked to be cruel and false, with their sharp points and their open eyes. Lily at once knew that it was the performance of a woman who had been taught to write at school, and not at home, and she became prejudiced against the writer before she opened the letter. When she had opened the letter and read it, her feelings towards the writer were not of a kindly nature. It was as follows :—

"A lady presents her compliments to Miss L. D., and earnestly implores Miss L. D. to give her an answer to the following question. Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E. ? The lady in question pledges herself not to interfere with Miss L. D. in any way, should the answer be in the affirmative. The lady earnestly requests that a reply to this question may be sent to M. D., Post-office, 455 Edgeware Road. In order that L. D. may not doubt that M. D. has an interest in J. E., M. D. encloses the last note she received from him before he started for the Continent." Then there was a scrap, which Lily well knew to be in the handwriting of John Eames, and the scrap was as follows :— "Dearest M.—Punctually at 8.30. Ever and always your unalterable J. E." Lily, as she read this, did not comprehend that John's note to M. D. had been in itself a joke.

Lily Dale had heard of anonymous letters before, but had never received one, or even seen one. Now that she had one in her hand, it seemed to her that there could be nothing more abominable than the writing of such a letter. She let it drop from her, as though the receiving, and opening, and reading it had been a stain to her. As it lay on the ground at her feet, she trod upon it. Of what sort could a woman be who would write such a letter as that? Answer it! Of course she would not answer it. It never occurred to her for a moment that it could become her to answer it. Had she been at home or with her mother, she would have called her mother to her, and Mrs. Dale

would have taken it from the ground, and have read it, and then destroyed it. As it was, she must pick it up herself. She did so, and declared to herself that there should be an end to it. It might be right that somebody should see it, and therefore she would show it to Emily Dunstable. After that it should be destroyed.

Of course the letter could have no effect upon her. So she told herself. But it did have a very strong effect, and probably the exact effect which the writer had intended that it should have. J. E. was, of course, John Eames. There was no doubt about that. What a fool the writer must have been to talk of L. D. in the letter, when the outside cover was plainly addressed to Miss Lilian Dale! But there are some people for whom the pretended mystery of initial letters has a charm, and who love the darkness of anonymous letters. As Lily thought of this, she stamped on the letter again. Who was the M. D. to whom she was required to send an answer—with whom John Eames corresponded in the most affectionate terms? She had resolved that she would not even ask herself a question about M. D., and yet she could not divert her mind from the inquiry. It was, at any rate, a fact that there must be some woman designated by the letters,—some woman who had, at any rate, chosen to call herself M. D. And John Eames had called her M. There must, at any rate, be such a woman. This female, be she who she might, had thought it worth her while to make this inquiry about John Eames, and had manifestly learned something of Lily's own history. And the woman had pledged herself not to interfere with John Eames, if L. D. would only condescend to say that she was engaged to him! As Lily thought of the proposition, she trod upon the letter for the third time. Then she picked it up, and having no place of custody under lock and key ready to her hand, she put it in her pocket.

At night, before she went to bed, she showed the letter to Emily Dunstable. "Is it not surprising that any woman could bring herself to write such a letter?" said Lily.

But Miss Dunstable hardly saw it in the same light. "If anybody were to write me such a letter about Bernard," said she, "I should show it to him as a good joke."

"That would be very different. You and Bernard, of course, understand each other."

"And so will you and Mr. Eames—some day, I hope."

"Never more than we do now, dear. The thing that annoys me is that such a woman as that should have even heard my name at all."

"As long as people have got ears and tongues, people will hear other people's names."

Lily paused a moment, and then spoke again, asking another question. "I suppose this woman does know him? She must know him, because he has written to her."

"She knows something about him, no doubt, and has some reason for wishing that you should quarrel with him. If I were you, I should take care not to gratify her. As for Mr. Eames's note, it is a joke."

"It is nothing to me," said Lily.

"I suppose," continued Emily, "that most gentlemen become acquainted with some people that they would not wish all their friends to know that they knew. They go about so much more than we do, and meet people of all sorts."

"No gentleman should become intimately acquainted with a woman who could write such a letter as that," said Lily. And as she spoke she remembered a certain episode to John Eames's early life, which had reached her from a source which she had not doubted, and which had given her pain and offended her. She had believed that John Eames had in that case behaved cruelly to a young woman, and had thought that her offence had come simply from that feeling. "But of course it is nothing to me," she said. "Mr. Eames can choose his friends as he likes. I only wish that my name might not be mentioned to them."

"It is not from him that she has heard it."

"Perhaps not. As I said before, of course it does not signify; only there is something very disagreeable in the whole thing. The idea is so hateful! Of course this woman means me to understand that she considers herself to have a claim upon Mr. Eames, and that I stand in her way."

"And why should you not stand in her way?"

"I will stand in nobody's way. Mr. Eames has a right to give his hand to any one that he pleases. I, at any rate, can have no cause of offence against him. The only thing is that I do wish that my name could be left alone." Lily, when she was in her own room again, did destroy the letter; but before she did so she read it again, and it became so indelibly impressed on her memory that she could not forget even the words of it. The lady who wrote had pledged herself, under certain conditions, "not to interfere with Miss L. D." "Interfere with me!" Lily said to herself; "nobody can interfere with me; nobody has power to do so." As she turned it over in her mind, her heart became hard against John Eames. No woman would have

troubled herself to write such a letter without some cause for the writing. That the writer was vulgar, false, and unfeminine, Lily thought that she could perceive from the letter itself; but no doubt the woman knew John Eames had some interest in the question of his marriage, and was entitled to some answer to her question;—only was not entitled to such answer from Lily Dale.

For some weeks past now, up to the hour at which this anonymous letter had reached her hands, Lily's heart had been growing soft and still softer towards John Eames; and now again it had become hardened. I think that the appearance of Adolphus Crosbie in the park, that momentary vision of the real man by which the divinity of the imaginary Apollo had been dashed to the ground, had done a service to the cause of the other lover; of the lover who had never been a god, but who of late years had at any rate grown into the full dimensions of a man. Unfortunately for the latter, he had commenced his love-making when he was but little more than a boy. Lily, as she had thought of the two together, in the days of her solitude, after she had been deserted by Crosbie, had ever pictured to herself the lover whom she had preferred as having something godlike in his favour, as being far the superior in wit, in manner, in acquirement, and in personal advantage. There had been good nature and true hearty love on the side of the other man; but circumstances had seemed to show that his good-nature was equal to all, and that he was able to share even his hearty love among two or three. A man of such a character, known by a girl from his boyhood as John Eames had been known by Lily Dale, was likely to find more favour as a friend than as a lover. So it had been between John Eames and Lily. While the untrue memory of what Crosbie was, or ever had been, was present to her, she could hardly bring herself to accept in her mind the idea of a lover who was less noble in his manhood than the false picture which that untrue memory was ever painting for her. Then had come before her eyes the actual man; and though he had been seen but for a moment, the false image had been broken into shivers. Lily had discovered that she had been deceived, and that her forgiveness had been asked, not by a god, but by an ordinary human being. As regarded the ungodlike man himself, this could make no difference. Having thought upon the matter deeply, she had resolved that she would not marry Mr. Crosbie, and had pledged herself to that effect to friends who never could have brought themselves to feel affection for him, even had she married him. But the shattering of the false image might have done John Eames a good turn. Lily knew that she had at any rate full permission from all

her friends to throw in her lot with his,—if she could persuade herself to do so. Mother, uncle, sister, brother-in-law, cousin,—and now this new cousin's bride that was to be,—together with Lady Julia and a whole crowd of Allington and Guestwick friends, were in favour of such a marriage. There had been nothing against it but the fact that the other man had been dearer to her; and that other fact that poor Johnny lacked something,—something of earnestness, something of manliness, something of that Phœbus divinity with which Crosbie had contrived to invest his own image. But, as I have said above, John had gradually grown, if not into divinity, at least into manliness; and the shattering of the false image had done him yeoman's service. Now had come this accursed letter, and Lily, despite herself, despite her better judgment, could not sweep it away from her mind and make the letter as nothing to her. M. D. had promised not to interfere with her! There was no room for such interference, no possibility that such interference should take place. She hoped earnestly,—so she told herself,—that her old friend John Eames might have nothing to do with a woman so impudent and vulgar as must be this M. D.; but except as regarded old friendship, M. D. and John Eames, apart or together, could be as nothing to her. Therefore, I say that the letter had had the effect which the writer of it had desired.

All London was new to Lily Dale, and Mrs. Thorne was very anxious to show her everything that could be seen. She was to return to Allington before the flowers of May would have come, and the crowd and the glare and the fashion and the art of the Academy's great exhibition must therefore remain unknown to her; but she was taken to see many pictures, and among others she was taken to see the pictures belonging to a certain nobleman who, with that munificence which is so amply enjoyed and so little recognized in England, keeps open house for the world to see the treasures which the wealth of his family has collected. The necessary order was procured, and on a certain brilliant April afternoon Mrs. Thorne and her party found themselves in this nobleman's drawing-room. Lily was with her, of course, and Emily Dunstable was there, and Bernard Dale, and Mrs. Thorne's dear friend Mrs. Harold Smith, and Mrs. Thorne's constant and useful attendant, Siph Dunn. They had nearly completed their delightful but wearying task of gazing at pictures, and Mrs. Harold Smith had declared that she would not look at another painting till the exhibition was open; three of the ladies were seated in the drawing-room, and Siph Dunn was standing before them, lecturing about art as though he had been brought up on the ancient masters; Emily and Bernard were

lingering behind, and the others were simply delaying their departure till the truant lovers should have caught them. At this moment two gentlemen entered the room from the gallery, and the two gentlemen were Fowler Pratt and Adolphus Crosbie.

All the party except Mrs. Thorne knew Crosbie personally, and all of them except Mrs. Harold Smith knew something of the story of what had occurred between Crosbie and Lily. Siph Dunn had learned it all since the meeting in the Park, having nearly learned it all from what he had seen there with his eyes. But Mrs. Thorne, who knew Lily's story, did not know Crosbie's appearance. But there was his friend Fowler Pratt, who, as will be remembered, had dined with her but the other day; and she, with that outspoken and somewhat loud impulse which was natural to her, addressed him at once across the room, calling him by name. Had she not done so, the two men might probably have escaped through the room, in which case they would have met Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable in the doorway. Fowler Pratt would have endeavoured so to escape, and to carry Crosbie with him, as he was quite alive to the expedience of saving Lily from such a meeting. But, as things turned out, escape from Mrs. Thorne was impossible.

"There's Fowler Pratt," she had said when they first entered, quite loud enough for Fowler Pratt to hear her. "Mr. Pratt, come here. How d'ye do? You dined with me last Tuesday, and you've never been to call."

"I never recognize that obligation till after the middle of May," said Mr. Pratt, shaking hands with Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and bowing to Miss Dale.

"I don't see the justice of that at all," said Mrs. Thorne. "It seems to me that a good dinner is as much entitled to a morsel of pasteboard in April as at any other time. You won't have another till you have called,—unless you're specially wanted."

Crosbie would have gone on, but that in his attempt to do so he passed close by the chair on which Mrs. Harold Smith was sitting, and that he was accosted by her. "Mr. Crosbie," she said, "I haven't seen you for an age. Has it come to pass that you have buried yourself entirely?" He did not know how to extricate himself so as to move on at once. He paused, and hesitated, and then stopped, and made an attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith as though he were at his ease. The attempt was anything but successful; but having once stopped, he did not know how to put himself in motion again, so that he might escape. At this moment Bernard Dale and Emily Dunstable came up

and joined the group ; but neither of them had discovered who Crosbie was till they were close upon him.

Lily was seated between Mrs. Thorne and Mrs. Smith, and Siph Dunn had been standing immediately opposite to them. Fowler Pratt, who had been drawn into the circle against his will, was now standing close to Dunn, almost between him and Lily,—and Crosbie was standing within two yards of Lily, on the other side of Dunn. Emily and Bernard had gone behind Pratt and Crosbie to Mrs. Thorne's side before they had recognized the two men ;—and in this way Lily was completely surrounded. Mrs. Thorne, who, in spite of her eager, impetuous ways, was as thoughtful of others as any woman could be, as soon as she heard Crosbie's name understood it all, and knew that it would be well that she should withdraw Lily from her plight. Crosbie, in his attempt to talk to Mrs. Smith, had smiled and simpered, —and had then felt that to smile and simper before Lily Dale, with a pretended indifference to her presence, was false on his part, and would seem to be mean. He would have avoided Lily for both their sakes, had it been possible ; but it was no longer possible, and he could not keep his eyes from her face. Hardly knowing what he did, he bowed to her, lifted his hat, and uttered some word of greeting.

Lily, from the moment that she had perceived his presence, had looked straight before her, with something almost of fierceness in her eyes. Both Pratt and Siph Dunn had observed her narrowly. It had seemed as though Crosbie had been altogether outside the ken of her eyes, or the notice of her ears, and yet she had seen every motion of his body, and had heard every word which had fallen from his lips. Now, when he saluted her, she turned her face full upon him, and bowed to him. Then she rose from her seat, and made her way, between Siph Dunn and Pratt, out of the circle. The blood had mounted to her face and suffused it all, and her whole manner was such that it could escape the observation of none who stood there. Even Mrs. Harold Smith had seen it, and had read the story. As soon as she was on her feet, Bernard had dropped Emily's hand, and offered his arm to his cousin. "Lily," he had said out loud, "you had better let me take you away. It is a misfortune that you have been subjected to the insult of such a greeting." Bernard and Crosbie had been early friends, and Bernard had been the unfortunate means of bringing Crosbie and Lily together. Up to this day, Bernard had never had his revenge for the ill-treatment which his cousin had received. Some morsel of that revenge came to him now. Lily almost hated her cousin for what he said ; but she took his arm, and

walked with him from the room. It must be acknowledged in excuse for Bernard Dale, and as an apology for the apparent indiscretion of his words, that all the circumstances of the meeting had become apparent to every one there. The misfortune of the encounter had become too plain to admit of its being hidden under any of the ordinary veils of society. Crosbie's salutation had been made before the eyes of them all, and in the midst of absolute silence, and Lily had risen with so queen-like a demeanour, and had moved with so stately a step, that it was impossible that any one concerned should pretend to ignore the facts of the scene that had occurred. Crosbie was still standing close to Mrs. Harold Smith, Mrs. Thorne had risen from her seat, and the words which Bernard Dale had uttered were still sounding in the ears of them all. "Shall I see after the carriage?" said Siph Dunn. "Do," said Mrs. Thorne; "or, stay a moment; the carriage will of course be there, and we will go together. Good-morning, Mr. Pratt. I expect that, at any rate, you will send me your card by post." Then they all passed on, and Crosbie and Fowler Pratt were left among the pictures.

"I think you will agree with me now that you had better give her up," said Fowler Pratt.

"I will never give her up," said Crosbie, "till I shall hear that she has married some one else."

"You may take my word for it, that she will never marry you after what has just now occurred."

"Very likely not; but still the attempt, even the idea of the attempt, will be a comfort to me. I shall be endeavouring to do that which I ought to have done."

"What you have got to think of, I should suppose, is her comfort, —not your own."

Crosbie stood for a while silent, looking at a portrait which was hung just within the doorway of a smaller room into which they had passed, as though his attention were entirely riveted by the picture. But he was thinking of the picture not at all, and did not even know what kind of painting was on the canvas before him.

"Pratt," he said at last, "you are always hard to me."

"I will say nothing more to you on the subject, if you wish me to be silent."

"I do wish you to be silent about that."

"That shall be enough," said Pratt.

"You do not quite understand me. You do not know how thoroughly I have repented of the evil that I have done, or how far I would go to make retribution, if retribution were possible!"

Fowler Pratt, having been told to hold his tongue as regarded that subject, made no reply to this, and began to talk about the pictures.

Lily, leaning on her cousin's arm, was out in the courtyard in front of the house before Mrs. Thorne or Siph Dunn. It was but for a minute, but still there was a minute in which Bernard felt that he ought to say a word to her.

"I hope you are not angry with me, Lily, for having spoken."

"I wish, of course, that you had not spoken; but I am not angry. I have no right to be angry. I made the misfortune for myself. Do not say anything more about it, dear Bernard;—that is all.

They had walked to the picture-gallery; but, by agreement, two carriages had come to take them away,—Mrs. Thorne's and Mrs. Harold Smith's. Mrs. Thorne easily managed to send Emily Dunstable and Bernard away with her friend, and to tell Siph Dunn that he must manage for himself. In this way it was contrived that no one but Mrs. Thorne should be with Lily Dale.

"My dear," said Mrs. Thorne, "it seemed to me that you were a little put out, and so I thought it best to send them all away."

"It was very kind."

"He ought to have passed on and not to have stood an instant when he saw you," said Mrs. Thorne, with indignation. "There are moments when it is a man's duty simply to vanish, to melt into the air, or to sink into the ground,—in which he is bound to overcome the difficulties of such sudden self-removal, or must ever after be accounted poor and mean."

"I did not want him to vanish;—if only he had not spoken to me."

"He should have vanished. A man is sometimes bound in honour to do so, even when he himself has done nothing wrong;—when the sin has been all with the woman. Her femininity has still a right to expect that so much shall be done in its behalf. But when the sin has been all his own, as it was in this case,—and such damning sin too,——"

"Pray do not go on, Mrs. Thorne."

"He ought to go out and hang himself simply for having allowed himself to be seen. I thought Bernard behaved very well, and I shall tell him so."

"I wish you could manage to forget it all, and say no word more about it."

"I won't trouble you with it, my dear; I will promise you that. But, Lily, I can hardly understand you. This man who must have been and must ever be a brute,——"

"Mrs. Thorne, you promised me this instant that you would not talk of him."

"After this I will not; but you must let me have my way now for one moment. I have so often longed to speak to you, but have not done so from fear of offending you. Now the matter has come up by chance, and it was impossible that what has occurred should pass by without a word. I cannot conceive why the memory of that bad man should be allowed to destroy your whole life."

"My life is not destroyed. My life is anything but destroyed. It is a very happy life."

"But, my dear, if all that I hear is true, there is a most estimable young man, whom everybody likes, and particularly all your own family, and whom you like very much yourself; and you will have nothing to say to him, though his constancy is like the constancy of an old Paladin, —and all because of this wretch who just now came in your way."

"Mrs. Thorne, it is impossible to explain it all."

"I do not want you to explain it all. Of course I would not ask any young woman to marry a man whom she did not love. Such marriages are abominable to me. But I think that a young woman ought to get married if the thing fairly comes in her way, and if her friends approve, and if she is fond of the man who is fond of her. It may be that some memory of what has gone before is allowed to stand in your way, and that it should not be so allowed. It sometimes happens that a morbid sentiment will destroy a life. Excuse me, then, Lily, if I say too much to you in my hope that you may not suffer after this fashion."

"I know how kind you are, Mrs. Thorne."

"Here we are at home, and perhaps you would like to go in. I have some calls which I must make." Then the conversation was ended, and Lily was alone.

As if she had not thought of it all before! As if there was anything new in this counsel which Mrs. Thorne had given her! She had received the same advice from her mother, from her sister, from her uncle, and from Lady Julia, till she was sick of it. How had it come to pass that matters which with others are so private, should with her have become the public property of so large a circle? Any other girl would receive advice on such a subject from her mother alone, and there the secret would rest. But her secret had been published, as it were, by the town-crier in the High Street! Everybody knew that she had been jilted by Adolphus Crosbie, and that it was intended that she should be consoled by John Eames. And people seemed to think

that they had a right to rebuke her if she expressed an unwillingness to carry out this intention which the public had so kindly arranged for her.

Morbid sentiment! Why should she be accused of morbid sentiment because she was unable to transfer her affections to the man who had been fixed on as her future husband by the large circle of acquaintance who had interested themselves in her affairs? There was nothing morbid in either her desires or her regrets. So she assured herself, with something very like anger at the accusation made against her. She had been contented, and was contented, to live at home as her mother lived, asking for no excitement beyond that given by the daily routine of her duties. There could be nothing morbid in that. She would go back to Allington as soon as might be, and have done with this London life, which only made her wretched. This seeing of Crosbie had been terrible to her. She did not tell herself that his image had been shattered. Her idea was that all her misery had come from the untowardness of the meeting. But there was the fact that she had seen the man and heard his voice, and that the seeing him and hearing him had made her miserable. She certainly desired that it might never be her lot either to see him or to hear him again.

And as for John Eames,—in those bitter moments of her reflection she almost wished the same in regard to him. If he would only cease to be her lover, he might be very well; but he was not very well to her as long as his pretensions were dinned into her ear by everybody who knew her. And then she told herself that John would have had a better chance if he had been content to plead for himself. In this, I think, she was hard upon her lover. He had pleaded for himself as well as he knew how, and as often as the occasion had been given to him. It had hardly been his fault that his case had been taken in hand by other advocates. He had given no commission to Mrs. Thorne to plead for him.

Poor Johnny. He had stood in much better favour before the lady had presented her compliments to Miss L. D. It was that odious letter, and the thoughts which it had forced upon Lily's mind, which were now most inimical to his interests. Whether Lily loved him or not, she did not love him well enough not to be jealous of him. Had any such letter reached her respecting Crosbie in the happy days of her young love, she would simply have laughed at it. It would have been nothing to her. But now she was sore and unhappy, and any trifle was powerful enough to irritate her. "Is Miss L. D. engaged to marry Mr. J. E?" "No," said Lily, out loud. "Lily Dale is not engaged to marry John

Eames, and never will be so engaged." She was almost tempted to sit down and write the required answer to Miss M. D. Though the letter had been destroyed, she well remembered the number of the post-office in the Edgeware Road. Poor John Eames!

That evening she told Emily Dunstable that she thought she would like to return to Allington before the day that had been appointed for her. "But why," said Emily, "should you be worse than your word?"

"I daresay it will seem silly, but the fact is I am homesick. I'm not accustomed to be away from mamma for so long."

"I hope it is not what occurred to-day at the picture-gallery."

"I won't deny that it is that in part."

"That was a strange accident, you know, that might never occur again."

"It has occurred twice already, Emily."

"I don't call the affair in the Park anything. Anybody may see anybody else in the Park, of course. He was not brought so near you that he could annoy you there. You ought certainly to wait till Mr. Eames has come back from Italy."

Then Lily declared that she must and would go back to Allington on the next Monday, and she actually did write a letter to her mother that night to say that such was her intention. But on the morrow her heart was less sore, and the letter was not sent.

The Furnishing of Bed-rooms.

HEAL and SON have observed for some time that it would be advantageous to their Customers to see a much larger selection of Bed-room Furniture than is usually displayed, and that to judge properly of the style and effect of the different descriptions of Furniture it is necessary that each description should be placed in a separate room. They have therefore erected large and additional Show-Rooms, by which they are enabled not only to extend their show of Iron, Brass, and Wood Bedsteads, and Bed-room Furniture, beyond what they believe has ever been attempted, but also to provide several small rooms for the purpose of keeping complete suites of Bed-room Furniture in the different styles.

Japanned Deal Goods may be seen in complete suites of five or six different colours, some of them light and ornamental, and others of a plainer description. Suites of Stained Deal Gothic Furniture, Polished Deal, Oak, and Walnut, are also set apart in separate rooms, so that Customers are able to see the effect as it would appear in their own rooms.

The Stock of Mahogany Goods for the better Bed-rooms, and Japanned Goods for plain and Servants' use, is very greatly increased, the whole forming as complete an assortment of Bed-room Furniture as they think can possibly be desired.

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